

Seven Circles Foundation NEWSLETTER

SPRING & SUMMER, 1997

Dear Everybody,

After years on the road, I've come home to a beautiful warm spiritual community, a community of goodness from all walks of life, from the unborn to the very elderly. Thanks for accepting me and my family into your hearts. Stay your wonderful beautiful natural selves.

"Even if you have to work on it." ☺

I appreciate the many gifts that have come to me, Laura, Keme and Kasha, "the Wahpepah family". Thanks too for the birth of the Seven Circles Foundation.

Blessings and Much Love,

Fred Wahpepah & Family



Photo: EIGER

Dear Community Members

a Letter from Michael Stocker

This newsletter marks a significant step for Seven Circles Foundation in our mission of supporting and promoting indigenous spiritual practices. Two years ago Fred indicated a desire to create a non-profit foundation to carry out this mission; through the diligent and patient work of all of us, we have finally arrived at the legal status of a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation. I would like to thank all of those involved for your support and input during this process.

There is often some confusion surrounding what it means to be a "Non-Profit" organization. I believe that the phrase "not for profit, public benefit organization" helps clear it up a bit. It means that we are doing work specifically for the benefit of the public and not for the profit of any individuals. By filing all of our paperwork with the I.R.S., we have demonstrated to them that our work benefits the U.S. taxpayers. In exchange for this benefit, the I.R.S. is willing to have us taxpayers help subsidize the work.

This allows us to determine how to spend some of our tax money. So

instead of mailing off a huge tax payment to the I.R.S. and have them decide what to spend it on, we can decide what to spend it on by writing checks to our favorite causes. This results in our getting to send a less huge tax payment to the I.R.S. while supporting things we more closely believe in.

How much your donations affect your tax payment depends on your tax strategy and income bracket, but the overall effect is that non-profit supporters get rewarded by the Fed for contributing to Seven Circles. Not such a bad deal.

I know that this all sounds a bit dry, and it only represents a small facet of what the community is really doing. The other articles in this newsletter are the true testimony of the growth and momentum of our community - it is what actually makes it all worthwhile. So thanks for all of your participation and support, and please feel free to attend any or all of the events discussed in our first newsletter.

Ho,
Michael Stocker
Chairman

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STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND

Michael Stocker

Thanks to the good intentions of all of our community members, what started out as an organization to support and stabilize the income of our elders has taken on a significantly larger mission. The quantity of ceremonial sites alone speaks of the enthusiasm and dedication of our community to learn and practice these ways. Seven Circles has been supporting or sponsoring ceremonial locations from Southern California through Oregon and are always willing to open up new places to pray. If you are a landholder with property you want used in a good way, please let us know; we may be able to sponsor a sweat lodge, tipi meeting, hambleche or arrange for some other ceremonial event on the property.

Part of our larger intention is to establish a large ceremonial site somewhere in the bay area. There are many ways this can be approached to include the wishes of our surrounding community. We have been looking at pulling together the common interests of the Marin County Open Space districts, the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, local indigenous groups and other private land use interests. I spoke with County Supervisor Steve Kinsey recently about Seven Circles Foundation's desire to become a steward of land in Marin. He was enthusiastic and supportive and indicated that he would "keep his finger in the wind" regarding land stewardship opportunities.

If you have any ideas on this line, please contact me at 415-488-0553 & I would be happy to discuss them.

MOONTIME AND CEREMONY

Ellen Faryna

Moontime refers to the time a woman bleeds during her menstrual cycle. Through this cycle, women feel the effects of the moon, like we see the Earth affected by the ocean tides. There is some controversy and confusion about menstruating women and their participation in Native Ceremonies, such as the sweatlodge. Bleeding women sacrifice and give to the people during their moontimes, and through childbirth. The sweat ceremony was created for men to have a way to sacrifice and give for the people since they do not bleed monthly, or give birth. The Creator does not ask so much that women need to double their effort to be close to Spirit.

Much knowledge of women's traditions has been lost due to the genocide of Native peoples and the outlawing of their ceremonies. Before patriarchy, bleeding women were respected for their ability to nourish life and many still view this bleeding time as the first ceremony to connect with Spirit. Patriarchal society continues to view women's bleeding as a curse: dirty, and something to be ashamed of. These histories of oppression of Native Peoples and of Women leave us vulnerable to feelings of exclusion, anger, or hurt when ceremonies do not include mooning women in the same way as others.

Native Women used to routinely withdraw from their regular duties of childcare and food preparation to a moonlodge during their bleeding in order to rest and

and receive dream guidance from the creator for their people. Some view this time of separation as a vision quest, a time to step away from daily tasks to focus on one's relationship with Spirit. The people honored and respected these bleeding women and their sacred role by covering the work otherwise done by them, and even cooking for them and protecting them.

Many of us are seeking to understand traditional viewpoints by praying about and learning their intent. Since many of us come from different cultures, we also seek to learn about native cultures and how to show respect for these traditions. We need new ways to balance the traditions with an understanding of ourselves as women, old and young: people with unique energies, gifts, and sensitivities, proud of ourselves and our place in the community. This is a time of rediscovery for women, and of ceremonies that will build upon our feminine and spiritual heritages, which will benefit all life.

Mooning women are invited to join the sweat ceremony by being present during the sweat, at the fire or some other comfortable place. Please stay and join the group for the feast at the end of the Sweat Ceremony. May we together continue the search within, with elders, and with other women to dream and pray for understanding in order to honor all gifts given.

THE WISDOM OF THE THIRTEEN MOONS - Women's Lodge in Novato

Verlinda Montoya

Long ago this wisdom was known by all children of the earth. All women understood the 28-day biological cycle in their body which came 13 times a year. Everyone knew thirteen moons was the path of life to walk that needed no exploring. The women's lodge in Novato, guided by Verlinda Montoya, emphasizes returning to our natural feminine frequency of thirteen moons and 28 days. Our intention for purification is based on the belief that each day has a unique energy, guiding power, and purpose that

tunes us to the flow of the Universe. By adopting the indigenous natural cycle we restore our lost sense of Oneness and assist the unfoldment of our deeper human potential. All elements of this traditional purification ceremony hold the energy of women, fire-keeper, helpers and water-pourer. The women's lodge is held the second Saturday of the month, and is open to all women.

Call (415) 892-5166 for more information. See page 3

SOME WORDS ON CEREMONY

Fred asked some of the caretakers of the various places we do ceremony for some words on the meaning of hosting and partipating in ceremonies. Here they are (and on Page 2 & 4).

From Phil & Linda Caesar:

Fred asked us to say a few words about what it's meant to us to be lodge keepers. Well, it's a great joy and a great responsibility, and it's meant:

- A prayer answered, a prayer that our home would be a place of spirit, of ceremony, of love and healing
- Good people hanging out in our backyard
- The sound of singing and drumming in the night
- Needing (and having) tolerant neighbors
- Having a place to go when I've needed help and a way to help others
- A large lost and found bag
- Getting to know where the stone people live and where Willow and Alder make their homes, and thanking them and bringing them home to build our lodge and hold the heat for us
- Sweat covers draped everywhere
- Great blessings on our home and land
- And, at the end of the evening, a short walk home...

The Magic Ranch Retreat

In Two Rock Valley, a few miles west of Petaluma, you will find the Magic Ranch Retreat.

Miwok and Pomo people once inhabited this land...a free zone beside the South Fork of Stemple Creek. Sleepy Hollow, beside the creek, is where the lodges are located. The Magic Ranch invites you to plant seeds of change for yourself and for the lives of those you love and care for.

The Magic Ranch has a Sweat Lodge and a Moon Lodge. The Moon Lodge is available to women at all times.

Ron and Jenefer, your hosts, greatly appreciate the help they get from the Sweat Lodge Community. Four work parties are scheduled to assist them. If you are willing to help, please call 3 days in advance - and Jenefer will make you lunch. Join us for Sweat Lodge Ceremonies at the Magic Ranch Retreat. To give is to receive...

NATIVE AMERICAN CEREMONIES

Here they all are! The location and directions are on top, time and dates are on the bottom. Bring food to share for the potluck after every ceremony. Please bring your own plates and utensils - we wish to honor Mother Earth by ceasing to use paper products. Please arrive one hour before ceremony. Some new jokes wouldn't hurt, either - all of ours are getting old. For information call (415) 458-3226.

ALGONQUIN PRAYER CEREMONY

WHERE: San Geronimo School, Lagunitas School Road, in Marin

Go west on Sir Francis Drake, in Marin, from Hwy 101. Past Fairfax and over the hill, past Spirit Rock and a golf course, just past the San Geronimo Community Center, is Lagunitas School Rd. R., all the way to end.

WHEN:

Sat. May 10, 5 PM Sat. June 14, 5 PM
Sat. July 5, 5 PM Sat. Aug. 2, 5 PM
Sat. Sept. 6, 5 PM

NATIVE AMERICAN(CO-ED) SWEAT LODGE CEREMONY

WHERE: San Geronimo School, Lagunitas School Road, in Marin

The sweats will be back at this location on Sat. Oct. 11, 5 PM. Thank you, John Kaufmann, for hosting this event.

NATIVE AMERICAN(CO-ED) SWEAT LODGE CEREMONY

WHERE: The Magic Ranch, 6315 Bodega Ave., Petaluma

In Petaluma, turn L. on Washington Ave. from 101. Wash. becomes Bodega Ave. at Petaluma Blvd. Drive out 7 miles past Pet. Blvd. Look for a sign on the R. that says "Welcome to Two Rock Valley", & Two Rock Rd. on the L. It's just past Two Rock Rd, on the L. Look for long rusty brown guardrail. Park on side of road.

WHEN:

Sat. Apr. 12 5:00 PM* Sun. May 25, 3:00PM*
Sat. June 21 5:00 PM Sat. July 19, 5:00 PM*
Sun. Aug. 17 1:00 PM Sun. Sept. 21, 3:00 PM*
Sun. Oct. 19th, 1PM
* Work party! at 9 AM

MEN'S, WOMEN'S SWEAT LODGES

WHERE: The home of Philip & Linda Caesar, 1619 Virginia, Berkeley

In Berkeley, go East on University from 80. Left at Sacramento, R. on Virginia. 1619 is on left. Go around to the back of house on R. Also! North Berkeley Bart is at corner of Sacto & Virginia

WHEN:

WOMEN'S
Sun. May 18, 2:30 PM
Sun. June 22, 2:30 PM
Sun. July 27, 2:30 PM
Sun. Aug 10, 2:30 PM
Sun. Sept. 14, 2:30 PM
Sun. Oct. 12th, 2:30 PM

MEN'S

Sun. May 18, 6:00 PM
Sun. June 22, 6:00 PM
Sun. July 27, 6:00 PM
Sun. Aug 10, 6:00 PM
Sun. Sept. 14, 6:00 PM
Sun. Oct. 12th, 6:00 PM

WOMEN'S SWEAT LODGE in NOVATO

WHERE: Verlinda Montoya's

256 San Marin Drive, Novato, Ca.
In Novato, Turn off Hwy 101 onto N. Atherton-San Marin. Go Left, past all stop lights. At the 3rd light, hang a U-turn, go back 12 houses to 256 San Marin.

WHEN:

Sat. May 10, 1:00 PM Sat. Aug. 9, 6:00 PM
Sat. June 14, 1:00 PM Sat. Sept. 13, 1:00 PM
Sat. July 26, 6:00 PM Sat. Oct. 11, 1:00 PM

NATIVE AMERICAN(CO-ED) SWEAT LODGE CEREMONY

WHERE: Verlinda Montoya's 256 San Marin Drive, Novato, Ca.

WHEN:

Fri. May 30 7:00 PM Fri. Aug. 29 7:00 PM
Fri. June 20 7:00 PM Fri. Sept. 26 7:00 PM
Fri. July 25 5:00 PM Fri. Oct. 24 7:00 PM

NATIVE AMERICAN PIPE CEREMONY

WHERE: Susan Branum's Back Room Yoga Studio

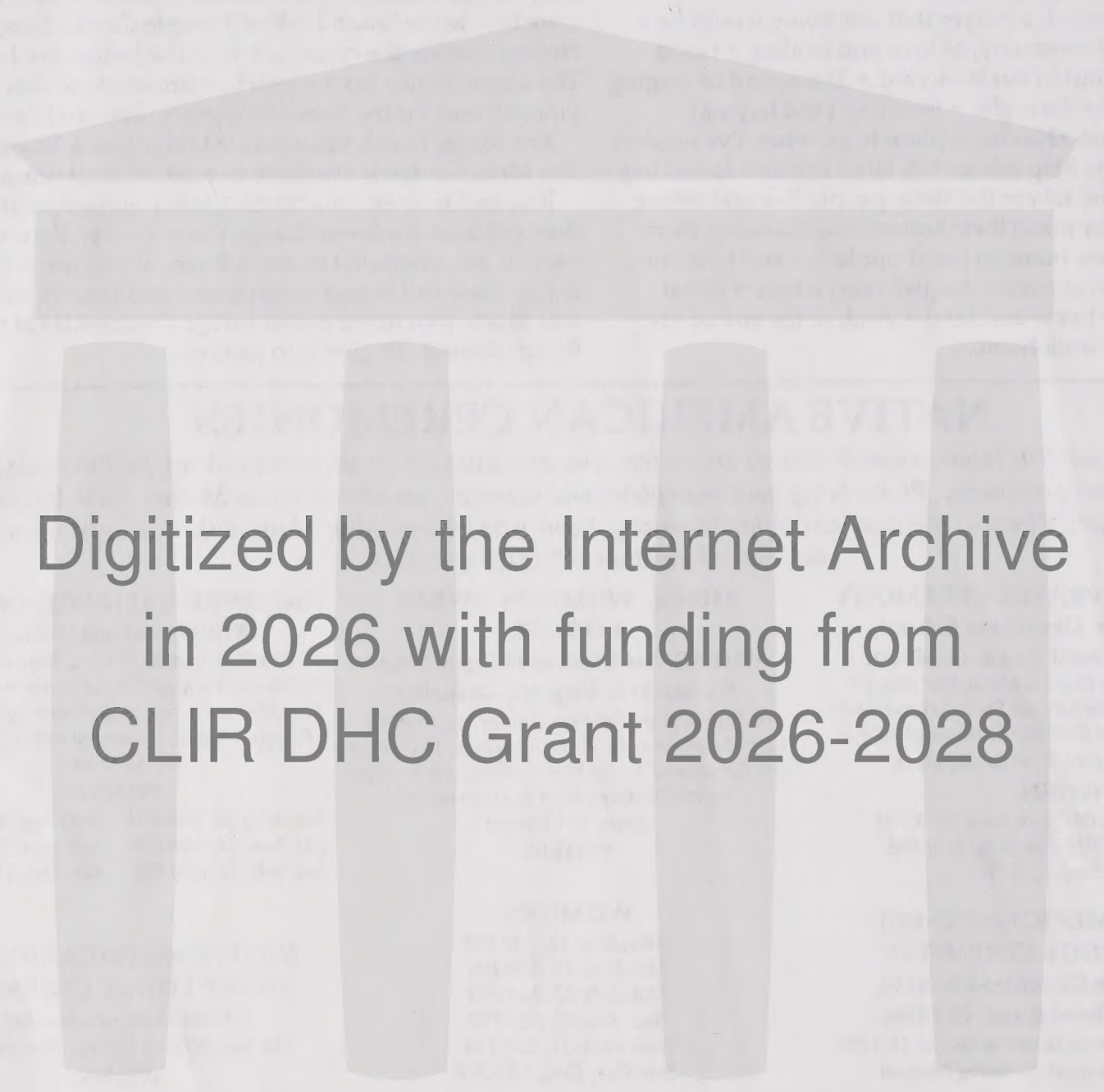
1199 Sanchez St., San Francisco, Ca.
Corner of 25th St. in Noe Valley

WHEN:

Sun. May 4, 3:00 PM Sun. Aug. 3, 3:00 PM
Sun. June 8, 3:00 P.M. Sun. Sept. 7, 3:00 PM
Sun. July 20, 3:00 PM. Sun. Oct. 26, 3:00 PM

For information about the Vision Quest, October 4-8th 1997, please call Fred at 510-236-3512.

Fred will be leading a sweat after a half-day of meditation at Spirit Rock, July 6th, 1997. For info call Spirit Rock 415-488-0164

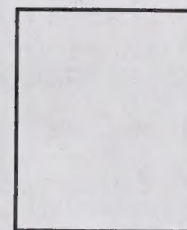


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Seven Circles Foundation
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(Address Correction Requested)



Re: Diann Mize11
Dagwaagi Itwe
Autumn Woman

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94110

The Gift Bowl

In the Circle of Life Nature seeks Balance

In the Earth centered spirituality and lifeways of the native peoples the interdependence with nature and each other is understood. The principal of reciprocity - giving back for gifts given - is fundamental to maintaining the health of the people. One becomes mindful that the gifts that come one's way are not to be taken for granted, but rather one expresses gratitude for having received the gift.

Medicine people and elders bring their ceremonies to us. The gift bowl is where we have the opportunity to reciprocate, to give back with a spirit of gratitude, for the teachings we have received and the ceremonies we have had the good fortune to participate in and learn from directly. The donation bowl is how we express our gratitude with financial contributions that directly support the well being of our teachers. Please give in accordance with what you can afford. There is no fee for spiritual teachings.

The first time I attended a Pipe Ceremony I had an experience of community and spiritual connection that I knew right away felt missing in my daily, self-occupied life. It is an experience so removed from our daily life; where we are given permission, even encouraged to speak from our hearts, to lift the burden of the unspoken out into a circle of others who hold the space and listen from their hearts about whatever comes up. There is no dogma, there is no judgment. My friend Fred likes to say, "Spirit is running this show." This man, Fred Wahpepah, who holds and guides this circle has sat in countless ceremonies. I see in him a patient, humble and loving human being. He is willing to spend his time listening to the trials and tribulations of the ones who come to be in ceremony with him.

In fact, he has dedicated his life's work to this very task. He is an elder, and I have the utmost respect for him. As I said, he is human. He has his own trials to deal with and that is why the circle works. The Sacred Pipe, representing the life of the people, carries our prayers up to the Creator. As the Sacred Pipe passes in the circle, we are reminded that we are related to all of creation. And what a great reminder to know that we are not in it all alone. Ah Ho! See P. 3

PIPE CEREMONY By Susan Brannum

ALC 63
CAMERON

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